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RIDLEY-THOMAS CHAMPIONS ELECTRONIC DATA SYSTEM TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Open Medical Record System will be used by multiple agencies and providers to track and manage medical, mental health, and patient/client information

LOS ANGELES – The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a memorandum of understanding to develop an electronic data system that will allow County agencies and private partners to share information and improve services to homeless people.

“This is a major breakthrough for the County and will serve as a role model for other integrated County Information Systems,” Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said, referring to the Open Medical Record System (MRS) that will be used by multiple agencies and providers to track and manage medical, mental health, and patient/client information.

With the action, the Board authorized the County’s Chief Executive Officer and directors of County health departments to establish the memorandum of understanding with JWCH Institute Inc. to provide the departments with Web-based access to the customized electronic database system.

An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 homeless people live in a 52-block area of downtown. Individuals served by these agencies need coordinated services to ensure appropriate care and unduplicated services by multiple agencies offering overlapping services.

Al Ballesteros, chief executive officer of JWCH, said “Open MRS-LA is important to homeless and other safety-net populations of the Second District because it facilitates

coordinated care between entities and organizations in a very easy, effective and secure manner.”

“This web-based registry, when utilized to its full potential, will allow a medical provider, social worker or housing care worker to quickly understand where a person is plugged into in the healthcare and social services system and what has or is being done with their case,” Ballesteros said. The system, he added, “will lead to quicker assistance, less duplication or effort and improved coordination to the eventual benefit of the patient.”

The MRS-LA Project also will help improve the care and treatment, health and social service agencies formed by the Skid Row Homeless Healthcare Initiative.

“This agreement is non-financial and endorsed by County Counsel, the Auditor-Controller Health Insurance and Portability Compliance Unit, Chief Information Office and the Office of Risk Management,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

The Memorandum of Understanding will be for a period of three years with automatic one year extensions unless either party notifies of intent not to extend.

Participating Agencies who enter a MOU with JWCH Institute will be granted legal access to view and input information about the medical, and mental health treatment, housing, and others social services that clients receive in the Skid Row area.

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